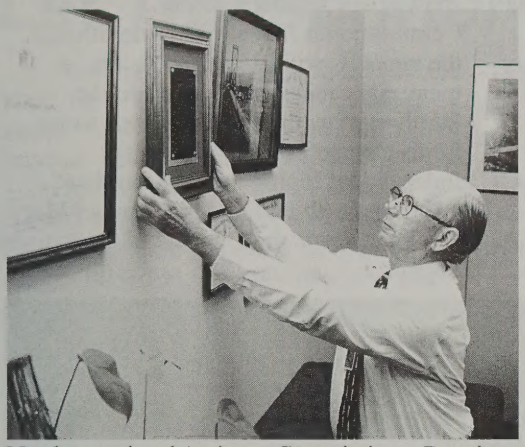
Transporter

Vol. 33 No. 06 July 1999

Keck named Assistant Commissioner



Newly-appointed Assistant Commissioner Dennis Keck readies his new office before settling into the myriad of assignments that await him.

Commissioner James Weinstein has named 28-year NJDOT veteran Dennis Keck Assistant Commissioner for Capital Program Management (CPM) and State Transportation Engineer.

"Dennis is a talented career NJDOT employee with vast experience in engineering and planning," Weinstein said. "I know the Department's multibillion dollar capital program is in good hands."

"I'm honored that the Commissioner has asked me to serve as Assistant Commissioner for CPM," said Keck. "I think CPM has a terrific team assembled. My overall goals are to deliver a solid, dynamic program, enhance communication and coordination between divisions and with our external constituencies, and to ensure that our transportation system provides the necessary foundation for growth and economic development," he said.

As Assistant Commissioner for CPM, Keck will be responsible for delivering the annual capital program, currently valued at $2.1 billion. Capital Program Management is made up of three divisions: Project Management, Design Services and Construction & Materials with a combined workforce of 1,456 employees.

Deputy Commissioner Al Ari called Keck a "diamond in the rough waiting to shine."

Chief of Staff Laurie Gutshaw agreed. "I've known Dennis for 15 years and there's no one more capable to lead this Department into the next century. He's the consummate professional whose assignments have placed him in every part of the department's organization. And, more important than his obvious skills and experience is his caring. To Dennis, NJDOT is a family and you can't beat that when you're searching for a leader."

According to Jim Pivovar, Manager of Mobility Strategies, Keck has a wonderful sense of humor and a competitive spirit. Whether it's golf, softball or solving difficult transportation problems, he said he always gives 100 percent. "He has a unique ability to bring people together as a team," Pivovar said.

Before accepting this position Dennis managed NJDOT's Portway initiative that supports the development and construction of New Jersey's premier intermodal and international corridor. From 1995 through 1998, he served as Senior Executive responsible for coordinating all Intelligent Transportation system activities for NJDOT. In this role, he also served as the Chairman of the I-95 Corridor Coalition Steering Committee and as a member of

Continued on back page

Tragic accident claims one of NJDOT's own

It's something Crew 368 of Central Region won't ever forget. On June 18 at 10 a.m. 50-year NJDOT veteran Assistant Crew Supervisor Louis Caruso started to put up a "Road Work Ahead 1 Mile" sign on Route 22 in Phillipsburg. At 11:53 a.m. he was pronounced dead of massive chest injuries.

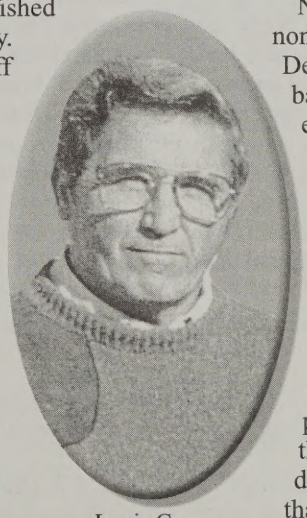
When a tractor trailer cement truck toppled over on Route 22 and struck a NJDOT utility truck that smashed into him, Caruso was erecting the safety sign to prevent accidents. It was supposed to alert drivers to the workers who were constructing a disabled persons curb. Noted for safety on the job, NJDOT had twice selected Caruso and his crew in the past for safety awards.

A Princeton native and most recently a resident of Baptistown, co-workers knew Caruso as a dedicated employee who did a job well. "At work he was known as the minuteman," said Crew Supervisor Paul Gentles, who was with Caruso every day. "He was always ready to work and did so with perfection. He was a great teacher, too. It had to be just right or he'd rip it out."

An active man, Caruso was in excellent shape and exercised regularly on the treadmill. He hunted, fished and camped near Sea Isle City. "Other young guys would huff and puff to do the work he did," said Gentles. "He had great stamina and did twice the work of a man half his age."

Crew 368, located in the West Amwell Yard in the Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren County section of New Jersey, is responsible for sidewalks and curbing. Caruso worked directly with the engineers to lay out the drainage for catch basins before they built it.

"When he saw a need, he jumped right in to complete it," stated Gentles. "In 1987 when the crew had no supervisor due to illness, there was no assistant, so Caruso took over the job completely. He won the NJDOT Employee of the Year Award for all that he accomplished."



Louis Caruso

NJDOT supervisors chose 46 non-managerial achievers in the Department for the 1987 award based on those who far exceeded the job performance standards for one calendar year. In addition to exceptional creativity, concern for safety, leadership skills, responsibility and devotion to duty, the employees must enhance the public image of the Department. Their personal records must show that they are free of disciplinary action. Caruso met that criteria and strove to excel in his work.

Caruso was very sensitive to others needs and was an organ donor.

Continued on page 2

Caruso continued from page 1

"Lou had his causes that he was firm about. He was always thinking about people," said Gentles.

"The West Amwell Yard has a small building now that employees can use, thanks to Lou," said Gentles. "It just has a stove and refrigerator and is a place where employees can talk — nothing special — but Lou saw the need so he and two other employees built it."

Caruso was hired off the street in Princeton in 1948 as a maintenance worker when the construction unit was located in the Fernwood section of NJDOT headquarters. Caruso, who was preparing to retire next year, often showed his lighter side.

"Lou was serious about work and always talked about his family, but he was a joker too," said Gentles. "One story I heard about him is that everyday Lou and his co-workers would go to a diner. As they left the diner, Lou would always stay until last. Then, when they went in the next day, he would be served first. Everyone wondered why he was getting all this special treatment and told him so.

"This went on for awhile until one day he told them a story about someone who took his friends' tips from the table and put them under *his* plate so the waitress would treat him more special than his friends. Then it hit them: it was Lou!"

There's no doubt that NJDOT employees miss their co-worker. They've shown their respect — from Commissioner James Weinstein through the ranks — with attendance at the memorial tribute, by outreach to the family, and by their contributions to the Louis Caruso Fund: Citizen's for Independent Living in Kingston. For information about this fund, contact Mary Lou Maguire in the Division of Operations Support.

Special memorials

• **Louis Caruso Yard**. To honor this special employee, the West Amwell Yard will officially be known as Louis Caruso Yard. The dedication will take place in mid-August.

• **Permanent Memorial.** The death of Louis Caruso has led to a Department-wide recognition that there should be a fitting memorial to all employees who have died on the job. Each Assistant Commissioner has named a representative to this committee who will advance and review suggestions for an appropriate memorial by the end of 1999.

All employees are invited to forward their suggestions to the persons on this committee who represent their work units.

The NJDOT Memorial Committee includes: Teresa Lourenco and Tony Davis, Commissioner's Office; Steve Kook and Verna Heath, Customer Advocacy; Ana Diaz and Debbie Driber, Finance; Art Smith and Joann Clark, Motor Vehicle Services; Mike DeVita and Angelo Gatto, Operations; Doreen Plummer and Nick Katkic, Capital Program Management; Nancy Webber and Mary Paterra, Planning; Tim Rudolph and Ed Hanna, Local 195.

Obituaries

Shirley Rooks of Trenton died April 13. The MVS Clerical Supervisor is survived by her daughter Kerri Seals, sisters, brothers and several grandchildren.

Former NJDOT employee **Robert Lee Williams** died April 15 in Trenton. Survivors include sons Robert Patrick, Walter and Corey, sisters and brothers and several grandchildren.

MVS retiree **Margaret E. Nagy** died April 15 in Texas. Survivors include her niece Geraldene Clower, several great-nieces, great-nephews and a great-great niece.

MVS retiree **Betty Lavine** died April 19 in Ewing. Survivors include her daughter Rita and several grandchildren.

NJDOT retiree **Floyd Krajeski** died May 8 in Yardley, PA. The Navy veteran of World War II is survived by a sister Hedwig Kelly, several nieces and nephews.

NJDOT employee **Louis Caruso** died on the job June 18 in Phillipsburg. The Navy veteran of World War II is survived by his wife Elizabeth, a son Louis Jr., daughters Beverly Kenny, Donna Flatley, Nancy Schiffl and Annmarie Caruso, a stepdaughter Jacqui Rogers, brothers John, Frank and Antonio, his sister Fanny Cunningham and many grandchildren.

Lorraine T. Kelly died June 23 in Hamilton. The former MVS Senior Audit Clerk is survived by her daughter Patricia Ponticiello, sons John W. Jr. and Robert J., many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Moving Up

Director Arthur Silber of the Division of Project Management recently announced the promotion of Nicholas J. Monahan to Manager of the Bureau of Right of Way.

Formerly District Manager in the Central Right of Way Region, Monahan also held positions as the Acting District Manager of Central Right of Way, Assistant Manager of the Appraisal Bureau in Trenton, Principal and Senior Appraiser in the Right of Way Unit.

Transporter

Governor
Christine Todd Whitman
Commissioner
James Weinstein
Communications Director
Jeff Maclin
Manager of Public Education & Marketing
Camille Sinclair

The *Transporter* is published for the employees and retirees of the New Jersey Department of Transportation. It is written and designed by the Communications Office, Main Office Building, Trenton, NJ 08625. The *Transporter* is printed by the Department's Print Shop.

Edyth Hetman, Editor; E-Mail edythhetman@dot.state.nj.us or Fax 609-530-5469.
Frank Bridgewater and **Glenn Catana,** Graphic Artists;
Joe Moore, Photography;
Kathleen Callahan and **Judi Tessein,** Support Staff.
Address changes: 609-530-2127 or juditessein@dot.state.nj.us.

People Briefs

Let *Transporter* share your news

Working on a unique project? Planning a big future event? Win an award? New baby? Getting married? Have an interesting hobby?

How to reach us. News about NJDOT employees is the heart of the *Transporter*. You can reach us best by email TPIHETM, fax 609-530-5469 and interoffice mail to Edyth Hetman, Communications Office, 1035 Parkway Avenue, Trenton. MVS employees can send items via the daily courier, or Dana Sullivan, the Public Information Officer.

What we need:

• your **name**, title, work area, telephone number;

• a short **summary** of the item: who, what, when, why and where;

• a brief **idea** of the interesting person or work project;

• action (not lineup) **photographs** that are sharply focused and identified left to right.

Deadlines. Transporter's remaining 1999 deadlines: August/September issue: August 16; October issue: October 4; November/December issue: November 8.

Photographers. Please let us know who you are. We rely on volunteers.

For more information, please call Edyth Hetman at 609-530-5427 or Judi Tessein at 609-530-2127.

Blue ribbons

Emergency services ...

... in Irvington: Assistant Commissioner Rod Roberson has thanks and praise for the Operations team members emergency response to a State Police call for assistance in Irvington, Essex County on Memorial Day weekend. A garage collapsed from excessive weight at the Maple Gardens Apartments, when an area above the subterranean structure was undergoing renovations.

NJDOT employees who provided engineering expertise to help the search and rescue team included **Al Brenner, Jimmie Cheaton, Pyong Chun, Michael DeVita, Joseph DeVita, William Falato, John Gahwyler, Reynaldo Gulin, Mark Kleckner, Anthony Kirksey, Kenneth Jenkins, John Pezik, Derrick Powell, Ronald Rosato, James Schmidt, Lewis Scott, Richard Shaw, and William Stevens.**

... in Dover: Dover Township Chief of Police Michael Mastronardy notified the Department of the quick response of Principal Engineer **Michael Moran**, Crew Supervisor **Kevin Britton** and **Crew 327** in an emergency situation on Route 9 and Sunset Avenue.

Safety first ...

... on Route 208: Assemblyman Nicholas R. Felice, Speaker Pro Tempore of the NJ Assembly, Fair Lawn Mayor David L. Ganz and Police Chief Rodman Marshall presented April NJDOT retiree and former Project Engineer **William (Bill) Munczinski** with two plaques for his professionalism, dedication and service to Fair Lawn Borough and the State of New Jersey at a Fair Lawn Borough Council Meeting in April.

The 27-year NJDOT veteran had worked on the Route 208 corridor project and developed improved safety conditions at several high accident intersections by removing traffic lights and introducing multiway stop controls.

Munczinski is currently employed by AmerCom Corporation in Parsippany.

Keep it moving ...

... on Route 18: Executive Director John Walz of Central Regional Operations recently praised Maintenance Worker **John Davis** for assisting a motorist with a flat tire on Route 18.

... on I-195: Walz also praised Crew Supervisor **William Parrot** of Central Regional Maintenance for his "foresight and initiative" to keep traffic moving away from an accident scene on Route I-195.

Cleaning up in Sayreville

Area Supervisor **James Farrell** and Assistant Crew Supervisor **Thomas Noel** and **Crew 312** received praises from Sayreville residents for the excellent job they did by removing a debris problem from behind a home on Route 35.

Customer service in Princeton

A. Sant'Angelo of Pioneer Real Estate in Princeton praised the efforts of Crew Supervisor **John Andrews** and Landscape Technician **Greg McMahon** of Crew 359 Landscaping in Central Regional Operations.

"They were courteous, polite and exceptionally helpful . . . and left my property in perfect condition," said Sant'Angelo.

Commissioner's notebook: Update on E&O Building

I am happy to share with you the progress being made on the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC) in the the Engineering & Operations Building.

We have succeeded in gaining the Treasury Department's support for the need to fund and advance this project. I am hopeful that we will be just as successful in obtaining the necessary Building Authority and Capital Planning Commission approvals this month. When they reconvene, the Legislature also must approve the project for funding.

The design is finished and the necessary construction permits issued, so the bidding and construction work can occur in the shortest time possible. After we obtain funding approvals we will receive construction bids and award the contract. We anticipate that construction will begin shortly after the new year.

The condition of our workplace and the safety of NJDOT's employees are of the greatest importance to me, as I know they are to each of you. I remain committed to making the HVAC upgrade to the Engineering & Operations Building a reality. I will keep you informed of the progress being made by the Division of Support Services.

– Commissioner James Weinstein

New Jersey
Department of Transportation
PO Box 600
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0600

Printed on reycled paper

Bulk Rate
U.S.Postage
PAID
Trenton, NJ
Permit No. 21

Keck continued from page 1

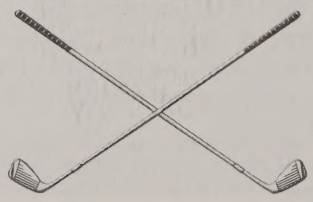
the Board of Directors of the Committee for a Smart New Jersey.

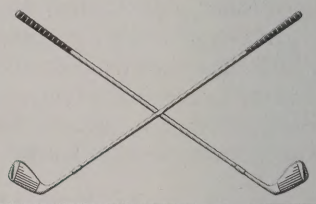
Between 1991 and 1995 Dennis served as the Deputy and the Acting Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Planning. He oversaw five divisions responsible for planning, capital programming and monitoring, collecting and reporting transportation data, regulating transportation and providing multimodal services and project development.

Starting his career at NJDOT in 1971, Keck was instrumental in coordinating the completion of New Jersey's interstate system. He is a licensed Professional Engineer and a licensed Professional Planner in New Jersey.

Keck graduated from Newark College of Engineering with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering in 1971. He completed his graduate program at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute of New York in 1977 and received a Master of Science degree in Transportation Planning and Engineering.

A lifelong New Jersey resident with roots in Sussex County, Keck currently lives in Mercer County.



NJDOTers slice and scramble

There's no question that these NJDOT employees spend their leisure hours on the greens. LEFT: For Dennis Keck, Bill Hoffman, Howard Immordino and Pat Scheffer the victory at the second annual NASTO Golf Tournament was sweet. This was the second win for the group who took first place at last year's tournament in Brigantine. RIGHT: Moving north a bit to the Central Region's Champion 1999 tournament in Allaire, John Shikoluk and Jim Mesinger congratulate fellow player Jeff Erb who aced the Perpetual Plaque and First Place Trophy. A hot buffet for 40 NJDOT golfers topped off the annual event.